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indignant voice against the selfishness and class hatred that sowed poverty and bitterness all over the land. "It is to the king's honour," he cried, in one of his bold practical sermons delivered before the king in March 1549, "that the common-wealth be advanced, that the dearth of these foresaid things be provided for, and the commodities of this realm so employed as it may be to the setting of his subjects on work, and keeping them from idleness. . . . If the king's honour, as some men say, standeth in the great multitude of people, then these grazers, inclosers, and rent rearers are hinderers of the king's honour. For whereas have been a great many householders and inhabitants, there is now but a shepherd and his dog. My lords and masters, such proceedings do intend plainly to make of the yeomanry slavery. . . . All the enhancing and rearing goeth to your private commodity and wealth. So that, where ye had a single too much, so now ye have double too much; but let the preacher preach till his tongue be worn to the stumps, nothing is amended." Latimer's contemporaries, Thomas Lever and Bernard Gilpin, are equally outspoken.

The abuses depicted by the preacher were the subject of bitter denunciation by contemporary scribes like Crowley, Brynkelow, and Hales, who were as hostile to rack-rents and enclosures as Sir Thomas More himself. The commercial spirit was already keen in sixteenth-century England, and the country was in the slow agony of an economic revolution. The mercantile class was accumulating wealth, and acquiring property in land or houses, and letting it out at exorbitant rents. Similarly, the landowners were bent on screwing out of their land as much as they could possibly get, without consideration for the wrongs and sufferings of the masses. The undue raising of rents, the rise in the price of provisions, the amalgamation of small holdings into large farms, the enclosure of common lands for the landlord's particular advantage, the turning of arable land into sheep pasture, increased poverty, starvation, crime in every county. The hardship and danger of these abuses stirred the energies of men like Latimer, Hales, Lever, Crowley, who were known as "Commonwealth's Men," and who inculcated, in general, justice and fair dealing between man and man, for the honour of God